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U.S. Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen,

REPORT OF

*The Administration of Freedmen's Affairs in
Louisiana, by*

J. S. FULLERTON,

Bvt. Brig. Gen. Vols..

While temporarily acting as Assistant Commissioner of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands for that State.

WASHINGTON, D. C., Dec. 1865.

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WAR DEPARTMENT,
BUREAU OF REFUGEES, FREEDMEN, AND ABANDONED LANDS,

Washington, December 2, 1865.

Major General O. O. HOWARD,

Commissioner:

GENERAL:—I have the honor to submit the following report of my administration of the affairs of this Bureau, in Louisiana, while temporarily performing the duties of Assistant Commissioner of that State.

On the 5th of October last I received Special Orders, No. 82, War Department, Bureau Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, of date October 4, 1865, directing me to proceed to New Orleans and relieve Chaplain T. W. CONWAY from further duty with the Bureau, and also to act as Assistant Commissioner for the State of Louisiana until the arrival of Brevet Major General A. BAIRD, when such duties would be performed by him.

In accordance with this order I at once left Washington for New Orleans, and arrived there October 15. On the next day I relieved Chaplain Conway, and announced myself as Commissioner of the State, *pro tem*. In addition to the instructions contained in the above mentioned order, I was also verbally directed to make such changes as I thought necessary, in the manner of conducting freedmen's affairs in said State.

Finding certain changes in the existing state of affairs necessary, I acted accordingly, keeping always in view the orders and instructions which I had received, in spirit as well as letter.

As soon as I arrived in Louisiana I made it my first duty to become acquainted with the real condition of the freedmen, and the temper of the whites, not only in New Orleans, but in all parts of the State. In order to arrive at the truth, I sought information from persons of every description, white and black, in the city, and on the plantations, and by so doing I was able, I think, to form a correct judgment, free from bias, prejudice, or favor for any particular class.

On the part of some agents there has been a want of tact, conciliation, and sound judgment. Their prejudices so blinded them that they could not properly approach the people with whom they had to deal; and it appears as though they went to the south to foster dissension rather than to cure and heal. In many cases they have produced inveterate enmity between the whites and blacks, instead of bringing about the good understanding and respect that their mutual interests require. They would listen to the story or complaint of the black man alone, refusing to hear

his white neighbor on the same subject, or, if they did listen, with the determination not to believe.

I found in many parts of Louisiana there was an almost universal opinion amongst the freedmen that the plantations in the state would be presented to them by the Government about next Christmas, and that they would be supplied with mules and agricultural implements for the purpose of working the same. With such understanding, they were refusing to work during the coming year, or any part thereof. They would enter into no new agreements with the planters, at any price, or under any circumstances. This refusal was not so much on account of their disinclination to labor, as on account of the expectation that they would, hereafter, work only for themselves on lands of their own, the gift of the Government.

It has always been my belief that the blacks will work better and produce more as freedmen than as slaves, and I know that, in Louisiana, where I have fully investigated the matter, they will do so as soon as some false notions entertained by them in reference to their freedom have been removed. When they know that the Government will not support them or furnish rations and clothing to the able-bodied who live in idleness, there will be such a revolution in the labor question of Louisiana as to cause all planters to rejoice that their slaves have been free! While it is true that the blacks, in some parts of the state, are not working as well as they might, and as stated, have refused entirely to work next year, they should not be blamed by their bitterest enemies, the poor whites, until they, themselves, set them a better example. It is hard for the people of the south to separate the idea of slavery from labor. If labor were considered honorable, and the white man would work in the fields, there would be no difficulty in procuring the labor of the blacks—this of course, when bad advice and impracticable notions are not given to them by evil disposed persons. While in slavery they saw the poor whites living without work, or on rented lands: they see the same now, and it is but natural for them to expect a like state of ease and enjoyment. The questions of labor, education, etc., so far as the former are concerned are as perplexing as those with which the Bureau must deal. But these are matters without our jurisdiction.

It is necessary for cotton and sugar planters to engage their labor in time to begin to prepare the fields for crops by the first of the New-Year, and they must be sure of retaining laborers from that time until the crops have been gathered in the fall. Otherwise, planting is a dangerous experiment, for a few days neglect of such crops, at certain seasons of the year, will cause their loss.

For these reasons I found the planters greatly exercised in regard to the labor question. The freedmen refused to work for them, and they were, consequently, very despondent over the prospects of the coming

year. In view of these wide-spread and increasing false notions and expectations of the freedmen, Mr. Conway, before leaving the Bureau, issued a Circular, informing them that they must not expect a gift of lands, and that they must go to work, making "all necessary arrangements, as soon as possible, to work for those who desire their services and are willing to pay fairly for them."

The evil had progressed so far that this Circular did not have the desired effect. Many of the freedmen did not believe that it was issued by Mr. Conway, and openly said that it was a "rebel forgery." The case now required an immediate, if not severe, remedy. In order, therefore, to convince the freedmen, and to encourage them to make contracts for work, for the next year, I issued a Circular, entitled "An address to the Freedmen of Louisiana," which informed them in as plain and forcible language as I could command, that the Government had made them free, and would to the last defend them in that freedom, but would not support them in idleness and vagrancy, and that no class of persons would be allowed to live as vagrants in a country where there is a great demand for laborers. They were also informed that they would be compelled to perform their part of the existing contracts for labor made for them by officers of the Bureau, unless such contracts were first broken by the planters. This was just, as these officers, by liens on crops and otherwise, compelled the planters to pay the freedmen their wages. The rule should work both ways; what was fair for one was fair for the other.

The foregoing is the substance of said address. The necessities of the case required that it should be issued. I thought it to be of the utmost importance that the freedmen should work during the coming year, not only for their own benefit, but for the good of the planters and of the country at large. It is also necessary that they should do so in order to give the denial to the prophesy of these friends of slavery who continually insist that the negro will not work if free. The result has proved that the address was timely. I ordered that it should be read on each plantation in the State, and that printed copies of the same should also be left thereon. Many of the freedmen, having been thus plainly informed of what was expected of them, soon showed a disposition to work under contracts for the next year, and the planters, acting under the belief that the evil complained of would, in a great measure, no longer exist, at once commenced to engage their services. The scarcity of labor, and the large profits that can be made on the crops of Louisiana, have caused a great demand for labor in that State. All of the able-bodied freedmen, if they will consent to work, can obtain employment at good wages, and there will still be room for many more laborers. Many planters called on me during the last week of my stay in the State to obtain information as to

how and where they could obtain hands, and offered for them good inducements. I could not direct them where to go for this purpose, but some went to Texas and some to Mississippi.

In my administration of freedmen's affairs in Louisiana, I acted upon the broad, democratic idea that there should be the same code of laws *for all*; that every exceptional law or regulation for the black man is but a recognition of the spirit of slavery. The steps that I took were necessary to annihilate the distinction of that caste which sprang from slavery. Laws of the State made to govern the white man, while the freedman was in a state of slavery, surely could not be too hard upon him when freed and admitted to the benefits and penalties of the same. But there were men who had such a tender regard for the freedmen that, while they were willing that they should accept the benefits of State laws, cried down as an outrage any attempt to render him liable to the penalties of the same. Thus when I attempted to show officially that the freedmen could be arrested as vagrants, or apprenticed, in accordance with the laws that were equally binding upon all free persons, these men were ready to express great indignation at the wickedness and enormity of such proceedings. The idea was constantly held out to the freedmen that they were a privileged people, to be pampered and petted by the Government. The effect was most pernicious. It not only gave them expectations that could not be realized, but prevented them from securing civil rights that the laws of the State conferred upon them.

It also appeared to me that there was not a sufficient effort made in this State to harmonize capital and labor. The acts of a few local agents of the Bureau were such as to destroy the confidence that should exist between those planters who were endeavoring to give free labor an impartial trial and the freedmen who worked in their fields. These acts were done through a mistaken notion of kindness to the blacks.

VAGRANTS.

A few days after my arrival in New Orleans, Captain Morse, the Provost Marshal of the Bureau for Louisiana, and who had for some time been acting in that capacity on the staff of Mr. Conway informed me that there were a large number of vagrant negroes in the city, able-bodied, healthy persons, who came from the country, and who, if not put to work, would soon be a charge on the Bureau. He requested me to ask the Chief of City Police to arrest these persons and deliver them to him, in order that they might be cared for. This I at first refused to do, as I did not wish any officer of the Bureau to make arrests of whites or blacks, or, if it could be prevented, to be instrumental in having arrests made. I was afterwards informed that it was the duty of the City Police to arrest all vagrants white and black, and that they did not arrest black vagrants

through fear of the Bureau officials, the Bureau alone having control of such cases. Upon this information, I then wrote to the Chief of Police requesting him to have all freedmen in the city who were "without any means of support and are vagrants arrested and sent to Captain Morse, Provost Marshal of the Bureau who will secure for them employment and means of support during the coming winter." The Chief directed his subordinates to carry out my request. So energetic were they in the performance of this duty that nearly all of the vagrant blacks, and many who were not vagrants, were brought before Captain Morse within two days after the order was issued. This order was not carried out in good faith, and as soon as it was reported to me that men who were not vagrants were being taken up, I at once revoked said request, and directed the Chief of Police to make no more arrests. This, I believe, was on the second day after the order was issued. All of the vagrants brought before Captain Morse were well provided for, and placed in such positions as to enable them to earn a support.

COLONIES.

I found in Louisiana ~~three or~~ four colonies of freedmen. These colonies were conducted by detailed officers of the army and citizen employees. The aggregate number of persons in all four was 391 infirm adults and 359 children. The plantations on which these were situated ~~are~~ cultivated by a large number of able-bodied freedmen at the expense of the Bureau. I sent an officer to each colony and plantation for the purpose of making a thorough examination, and to report upon the condition of the same. From him I learned that they had been miserably managed. One colony or plantation, from the proceeds of the crop, will nearly pay expenses, but the others are not self-supporting, and will be a heavy charge upon the Bureau. The Medical Director of the Bureau for Louisiana also reported that, owing to his inability to procure proper medicines, attendance, and supplies, the mortality among the freedmen has been great.— These circumstances taken together with the fact that all of said plantations, save one, will probably soon be returned to the owners thereof, in accordance with your Circular No. 15, led me to determine to break up all colonies, save the one on the plantation that would probably not be restored, and to move upon this all of the infirm and helpless, dismissing all supernumerary and unnecessary agents and employees. A great expense would thus be saved to the Bureau, and much mortality and immorality prevented. This change had not been completed when General BAIRD arrived and relieved me from duty as Assistant Commissioner.

ASYLUMS.

There were in New Orleans two Asylums for orphans of freedmen.—

One in the Soule mansion, and the other at the corner of Fourth and Chesnut streets. These were partly supported by the Bureau, having been furnished by it with quarters, rations, clothing, and a small amount of hospital supplies, and the orphans were under control of the Assistant Commissioner of the Bureau, "guardians of orphan minors of freedmen within their respective districts." A few days after I assumed the duties of Assistant Commissioner of the Bureau for Louisiana, I visited the Asylum on the corner of Fourth and Chesnut streets. There I found a state of affairs which, to say the least, was decidedly unsatisfactory. There were about thirty inmates, mostly boys, some of whom were from 12 to 15 years of age, and were able to work and take care of themselves. These orphans were being brought up in idleness and ignorance. Their only occupation appeared to be to lie around in the warm sunlight, and to play marbles. Such articles as wash basins, towels, combs, &c., usually kept in all well regulated Asylums, were wanting, and from the general sanitary condition of the establishment it did not surprise me to learn that disease was prevailing among the children. While making my visit, one of the *orphans* was called out to the gate to see his *father*. A few days before, a mother brought back her *orphan* son to the Asylum, and occasionally giving him a blow with the strap in her hand, told him that if he ran away again she would "skin him alive!" This mother, I was told, owned property in the city, the rent of which was producing her an income. It is due to the manager of this Asylum to say that she was in no manner whatever responsible for its condition, having arrived in New Orleans and taken the control of it but a few days before. She is a woman of true principles and good heart, and was as much provoked as I at the manner in which it had been conducted. Had she possessed the means, she would soon have made a change for the better. The next day I issued an order stating that the orphans in these Asylums would be apprenticed by the Assistant Commissioner of the Bureau to *good and responsible persons*, in order that they might be properly cared for, and acquire habits of industry and morality. The contracts of apprenticeship were to be made in accordance with the law of the State, and the same laws that governed in the apprenticeship of white children would govern in this case. I did not consider this a great hardship, nor did I think it was, in any manner, reducing the orphans to slavery, notwithstanding the complaints of some supposed friends of the freedmen. I issued the order as "guardian of the orphan minors of freedmen" in Louisiana.

The effect of my action was to break up the institution on the corner of 4th and Chesnut streets. In some mysterious manner the orphans disappeared. Some of them went to the other Asylum, some were taken care of by benevolent persons, and a few, I suppose, went to their homes.

The day after the "Apprentice Order" was issued, Madame LOUISE DE MORTIER called at my office, and informed me that the Asylum at the Soule Mansion, of which she was Matron, was partly supported by charitable Societies of the North, and that if the order were withdrawn so far as it was concerned she would make arrangements to conduct it free of Government expense. I at once agreed to this proposition and withdrew the order so far as it extended to her charge. I did not visit this Asylum, but was informed that it was properly conducted. Afterwards, I issued a general Apprentice Order to cover the case of all orphans of freedmen in the State. This Order provided that "The agents of the Bureau may make with good and responsible persons agreements of apprenticeship or service for the minor orphans of freedmen. But they shall not have the power to bind or apprentice minors whose parents are living, without the consent of such parents. The agreements or contracts must provide that in return for the service to be rendered by the orphans so apprenticed or bound, they shall receive comfortable clothing, board, medical treatment, when sick, a reasonable amount of schooling, and permission to attend church each Sabbath. At the end of the term of apprenticeship, or service, they shall be allowed to retain all of their articles of personal apparel. All of such contracts shall expire, for males when they are eighteen, and for females when they are fifteen, years of age."

The contracts are to be submitted to the Assistant Commissioner of the Bureau for approval. It was also ordered that they should be made in accordance with the laws of the State, so that if at any time the Bureau should be withdrawn from Louisiana, the proper civil officers might, for proper legal reasons, enforce or annul them.

ARRESTS AND FREEDMEN'S COURTS.

The next step taken by me was to direct that no more arrests be made by the officers of the Bureau, and to abolish those tribunals of special jurisdiction known as Freedmen's Courts. I thought it better that, in cases where arrests were necessary, the officers of the Bureau should call on the military officers in the vicinity to take cognizance of the matter. By so doing, justice would be equally obtained, and a disagreeable feature removed from the Bureau. There are men in the Bureau whose prejudice in favor of the black race go so far that they can hear only one side of a complaint, and whose zeal leads them, in many instances, to use the power of arrest that has been committed to them, to the great detriment not only of the white man but also of the black. Wherever a wrong is done the white man, the result is to create in his breast a proportionate hatred of, or enmity towards, the blacks. These officers escaped all ill effects of such action except personal abuse, but the black man suffers otherwise.

By virtue of the laws of the State of Louisiana, both under the new

constitution and the old code, *all free* persons, without regard to color, are admitted in the State Courts. The black man has the same rights in these courts as the white. He can sue and be sued, and his own testimony can be taken in all cases, whether the parties to the suit are white or black. In this respect, the laws of this Southern State are very liberal. Such being the fact, I directed that all "freedmen's courts" in the State of Louisiana be abolished, and that the cases then pending in the same should be transferred to the civil courts. I also ordered the Provost Marshal and agents of the Bureau to appear in court in all cases where either freedmen were bringing suit or being tried, as their attorney or next friend; that they should bring suits for them when necessary, and defend them when tried. These officers were also prohibited from interfering in any manner with the proceedings of civil courts. In cases, however, where the civil authority refused to offer relief to the freedmen, or refused to receive their testimony or hear their complaints, as they are bound to do by law, it was ordered that the matter should be laid before the nearest military commander, who would make arrests or take such action as the case required. The establishment of these exceptional tribunals, in places where the laws of the State admit the freedmen in the courts on the same footing as the whites, is one of those cases which recognized the spirit of slavery and the caste that sprung from it. It is treating the freedmen as a separate and exclusive class, for whom a distinct set of acts and regulations must be made, and it admits that they cannot be governed by the same rules and live under the same laws as the whites. The freedmen, also, become strongly impressed with the idea that they are a peculiar people, having nothing in common with their white neighbors, and learn to consider themselves either superior or inferior to others of like intelligence and property. It is said by some that freedmen's courts are necessary in Louisiana, because even though the law admits them in state courts, the judges will refuse their testimony and, even if they do not, they cannot there obtain justice. Why do they say so when the attempt to obtain such justice is not made? The law guarantees them a civil right, and if it is wrongfully refused they should contend for it. If they do not do so now, the law may become a dead letter on the statute books. It is far better that a few should suffer from the injustice of some state courts than that all should not be allowed to testify and sue in the same. Judges and juries do not always render decisions that are supposed to be just by both parties to suits. When men's interests are at stake they often err in judgment. The fact appears to be overlooked by the freedmen and their friends that, in many cases, as great injustice is done to the white man in the "freedmen's courts" as can be done to the freedmen in "white men's courts." Freedmen's courts are necessary for the protection of the blacks in those States where they are

not allowed to testify, even though they may be pro lative of abuse and injustice when presided over by improper persons.

CONTRACTS.

Before being relieved by General Baird, I issued an order directing the agents of the Bureau to instruct the freedmen, within their respective districts, that they should then commence to make contracts to work for the coming year. I also set aside all of the multifarious and cumbrous rules, regulations, and instructions that had been heretofore observed in making such agreements, and left the whole matter subject only to the simple laws of supply and demand. There is a large demand for labor in Louisiana, and good contracts can and will be made by the freedmen. I did not do the injustice to their intelligence to take it for granted that they did not know how to make a bargain or agreement, to stipulate how they should be paid and when. If not improperly interfered with, they will well take care of such matters, and it will be time enough for the Bureau to interpose when it is discovered that the freedmen are suffering imposition and wrong in this regard. Nor must it be supposed that they do not know how to take care of what they get. It may surprise some persons to hear that while the poor whites of the State were almost penniless, scarcely a black, who was not ^{at} a vagrant, can be found who had ^{at} not a small roll of lawful currency in his pocket.

For other reasons it is not well to fix the price of labor. In some parts of the State there is a greater demand for labor than in others, and there, of course, better wages would be given. What can be paid in a particular locality is the price to bargain for. There is no danger that the freedmen will ask too little for their services. In some cases they wish to work for a share of the crops, in others, for money, and if they are allowed to make their own terms, there is much more probability of their living up to the contracts. It has been remarked in my presence by intelligent blacks: "We are not free. You say that we have to work for certain wages, in certain places, and for certain persons. Let us make our own bargains."

All that is necessary under my order is for the freedman to agree with whomever he may choose, upon conditions under which the work is to be performed; have a written contract drawn up, and then submit the same to an agent of the Bureau within the State for approval. This is necessary, as, in some cases, freedmen who cannot read might be imposed upon by the terms of the written instrument.

CLOTHING AND RATIONS.

I am not able to report the number of refugees and freedmen to whom clothing and rations have been furnished by the Government, but it is not large. The reports that have been heretofore forwarded to the Head-

quarters of the Bureau are correct as far as they go, but they do not account for those to whom supplies have been furnished by the military authorities. A correct and complete report can be made by General Baird by consolidating the Bureau report with a statement of the amount supplied by order of the Department Commander.

SCHOOLS.

In Louisiana there are one hundred and forty-one schools for freedmen, and attending them are nineteen thousand scholars. These schools have been supported in whole by funds of the Bureau. There are employed

Twelve Directors at a joint salary of - - -	\$1,225	per month.
Three Special Agents at a joint salary of -	300	"
Five Clerks - - - - -	470	"
Twelve Principals - - - - -	1,350	"
Twenty-eight 1st Assistants - - - - -	2,080	"
Thirty 2d " - - - - -	2,070	"
Eighty-nine primary teachers - - - - -	5,340	"
City Superintendents of New Orleans -	1,50	"
One Acting Assistant Superintendent -	100	"

Added to the above are two members of the Board of Examination, who receive five dollars per day while on duty, and eight janitors who receive each from ten to twenty-five dollars per month. There are also several officers connected with the schools who draw salaries as officers in the military service. The cost of conducting these schools is now between seventeen and twenty thousand dollars per month.

So long as there were plenty of funds on hand, and it was easy to levy taxes, there was no endeavor to make them self-supporting. I found that the expenses of the Bureau were so large, and the income was growing so small, that there would, probably, be no funds in the exchequer by the latter part of January next, even for paying the civilian agents and employees of the same, and but little more could be advanced by it for school purposes. It was, therefore, apparent that, unless the schools were put on a different footing, or received assistance from other sources, they must soon be discontinued. I informed Capt. PEASE, the Superintendent, of this fact, and asked him to submit to me a plan to render them self-supporting, but nothing was done in the matter up to the time I left the State.

The wealthy black people of New Orleans and other parts of Louisiana refused to do anything for this cause, because, as they say, they pay a general school-tax, all of which, by law, goes to the support of schools for the whites. Although there is an injustice in so appropriating the tax paid by them, I did not see the force of this reasoning. If they desire their children to be educated, they should do something to-

wards supporting the schools, even though they unfairly paid twice for it. I thought that the idea that the general government will support schools should be held out no longer, unless there is a prospect of some legislation on the subject. If I have been correctly informed, the proportion of the school-tax paid by the black people of the city of New Orleans amounts to over forty-thousand dollars per annum. I represented to his Excellency, the Governor, and several of the leading members of the new legislature, the injustice of appropriating this tax exclusively for the benefit of white schools. They fully agreed with me, and promised that at the next meeting of the legislature of the State they would have an act passed appropriating the tax paid by blacks, exclusively, for freedmen's schools. Since commencing this report, I have received a copy of Governor Well's message, and I am glad to say that he recommends to the legislature such action. One of two things must soon be done in reference to these schools in Louisiana. Either they must be conducted on more economical principles, and made in part, at least, self-supporting, or they must be discontinued. No funds were being advanced for the support of freedmen's schools by the Quartermaster's Department at the time I arrived in Louisiana, but they were supplied, as stated, with means from the common fund of the Bureau. This fund was collected 1st. from rents of leased estate which was held by the Bureau as abandoned lands; 2d. Fines and Fees; 3d. Poll Tax; 4th. School tax. Since the publication of Circular No. 15, War Department, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, much of the real estate that was held by the Bureau in said State has been restored to the owners thereof, not having been abandoned in the meaning of the law, and some has been restored to owners who had been pardoned by the President. But a small income will be derived hereafter from estates remaining in possession of the Bureau. Not near enough to pay the salaries of the civil employees of the same.

The fines were such as were imposed by Judges of Freedmen's Courts, and the fees were collected as charges on bonds, &c. By General Orders, No. 23, Headquarters Department of the Gulf, New Orleans, March 11, 1865, it was ordered that a Poll Tax be levied as follows: "From each planter, for every hand employed by him between the ages of eighteen and fifty, two dollars per annum. From each hand, between the same ages, one dollar per annum. This sum was to be payable and to be collected on the first day of January following, and the amount collected was to be appropriated "for the purpose of reimbursing to the United States some portion of the expenses of this system (the labor system inaugurated by said General Orders.) and of supporting the aged, infirm, and helpless." Up to the 1st of November last there was collected of this Poll Tax \$39,501 44, all which went into the Exchequer of the Bureau.

The origin of the school tax was as follows: On the 22d of March, 1864, Major General Banks, then commanding the Department of Louisiana, ordered that a tax be assessed upon the people of Louisiana for the support of schools of freedmen for one year; but it was not collected. In order, however, to support these schools, which were at once inaugurated, there was advanced by the Quartermaster's Department from the first of May, 1864, to the 30th of September, 1865, \$237,699 20. Of this sum, \$158,229 70 were funds raised by an assesment on the *Corps d'Afrique*, cotton tax, &c., and \$79,469 50 were Quartermaster's funds proper. On the 24th of July last, in answer to a letter received from Mr. Conway, the Assistant Commissioner of the Bureau for Louisiana, you wrote to Major General Canby, then commanding the Department of Louisiana, requesting him to enforce General Banks' School-tax Order for the purpose of procuring means to repay said advances made by the Quartermaster's Department. On the 7th of August following Mr. Conway also requested General Canby to enforce said Order. General Canby at once turned the matter over to Mr. Conway, directed him to proceed with the collection of the tax, and offered him military assistance for that purpose. The amount of tax levied in the State by virtue of this Order was \$228,307 50. The collection was commenced and proceeded with until I was informed by the collector that it would be impossible to collect more without using military force to imprison persons, or to seize and sell property. Many persons, though possessing real estate, had not the money to pay the tax, and many refused to pay, as they contested its legality. This statement of facts I telegraphed to Washington, and asked for instructions as to whether I should proceed to collect the remainder of the tax by military force. The reply was, not to continue the collection at that time, and I at once suspended it. Forty-two thousand dollars of this tax had been collected, but ^{none} ~~more~~ of this sum was set aside for the purpose of reimbursing the Government for advances made through the Quartermaster's Department. It was all paid out for freedmen's schools, and on other Bureau accounts. I do not suppose the Assistant Commissioner for Louisiana will ever be able to repay this sum, or any part thereof, unless some new way is devised for procuring funds.

OFFICERS ON DUTY AT HEADQUARTERS.

I found on duty at the Headquarters of the Bureau two Majors, five Captains, eight Lieutenants, and two Chaplains. Two of these officers were in the Medical Department. As there was a great necessity for officers in the interior to act as Agents, Provost Marshals, &c., I determined to reduce the establishment so that it might be conducted by not more than four officers, together with the Assistant Commissioner, and to send the others to the interior. As I was not in Louisiana long enough to

make all the changes desired, I left this matter in the hands of Major General Baird, after sending off some supernumerary officers and employees.

COMPLAINTS OF CORRUPTION.

Loud complaints had been made by the citizens of New Orleans of the corruption of some of the employees at the Headquarters of the Bureau in that city. I inquired into the matter, and found that they were not made without some grounds. Wishing to elevate the tone of morals, and to discourage the loose way of transacting business, I dismissed one of the chief clerks for accepting bribes from citizens. I was told that, notwithstanding this weakness, it would be well to keep him for a while, as he was a very useful man in giving information as to the loyalty and status of citizens who made application for the restoration of property held by the Bureau.

CONCLUSION.

I believe that the freedmen of Louisiana are in a better condition than those in any other State embraced within the operation of this Bureau. There is not amongst them an able-bodied man who cannot get employment and good wages. The planters of the State are very desirous of restoring their fortunes by cultivating the fields. Large profits can be made on the staple crops, and for this reason they can give good wages. The freedmen generally know this fact, and will not therefore work for a pittance. More than a majority of them obtained employment last year, when but a small portion of the fields were cultivated, and we have but to consider the fact that the most of the planters now desire to raise sugar and cotton, to form a judgment of the demand for labor for the coming year. Before the war, four hundred thousand (400,000) hogsheads of sugar, and an equal number of barrels of molasses, were made in Louisiana. This year's crop of cane will not yield over twelve thousand (12,000) hogsheads of sugar and four een thousand (14,000) barrels of molasses. Then nine-tenths of the arable land of Louisiana were under cultivation, in cane, cotton, and corn: this year there has not been over one-fifth. It was impossible for me to arrive at anything like the proportion of acres that will be planted the next season: but, as there is nothing now to fear from the accidents of war, there will be a large increase over the proportion of last year.

There is a growing disposition on the part of the planters to act justly and fairly towards the freedmen, and to secure to them the exercise of their legal rights. This may be because they know that their former slaves are now free, and that it will be impossible again to reduce them to slavery, in any shape or form, that they are the only sugar and cotton

workers that they can at present procure: and that it is necessary to secure for them such rights in order to make them willing and competent workers. They are also showing a disposition to allow the freedmen those opportunities of educating their children which they have not heretofore possessed, for it is becoming evident to them that free labor flourishes ^{best} but in those places where schools abound. The enmity against the black race, in the South, comes principally from the poor whites; those of them, who do work fear the competition of black labor, and nearly all of them having before them the fear of "negro equality," do what they can to oppose their freedom and the working of the free labor system. But the war has not left enough of this class in Louisiana to exert any considerable influence.

It is not true that there are great numbers of freedmen being murdered by the whites in Louisiana. During the month that I remained in the State but one case of this kind was presented to the Bureau, so far as I now recollect. This was the case of a freedman who had been shot and wounded by a white man, and the offender, when arrested, claimed that the freedman had first fired at him. That there are many cases of outrage that are never heard of is most true: but from all that I have learned, I do not believe that society, in this respect, is more demoralized at present in Louisiana than in some states farther north, as represented by the public press. By telling only the bad acts that have been committed, and giving these as an index of society, any large community could be pictured as barbarous. These remarks are not made in any manner apologizing for that class of whites who have so little humanity as to abuse and maltreat the black man because he has been freed: but I cannot make an impartial report of facts unless I show both sides of the picture. We must look at the matter as it exists, and not give way ~~to~~ to one set of complaints only, nor allow our preconceived opinions and prejudices to blind us and prevent us from correctly exercising our judgments.

HOW LABOR WILL BE A SUCCESS IN LOUISIANA.

The only concern the planters at present appear to have on this question, is: "will the freedman fulfil his contract for work, if we fully and fairly carry out our part of the agreement?" They will not work next year as well as we may desire, but better than we have a right to expect. Men who have been suddenly freed, entertaining some ^{future} notions of freedom, and in some cases acting under bad counsel of both friends and enemies, are not apt to be at once energetic workers. Gradually the planters and freedmen begin to understand that, for the present, each is dependent upon the other. The planter must have their labor, and the freedmen must have the planters wages until they can procure property of their

own. I speak advisedly when I say that in five years from now, unless some new element of discord intervenes, the freedmen will work as well, and be in as prosperous condition, as any person can desire, and the rich and beautiful plantations of Louisiana will be far better cultivated and more profitable than ever in the past.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

J. S. FULLERTON.

Brevet Brigadier General Volunteers.

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